1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

137 cleared for native gardens, some is still virgin, being distinguished by the presence of giant trees with spreading flanges or buttresses. The forest presents an infinite variety, with this important characteristic, that the variety is for ever repeating itself, so that a man who requires any particular product usually has not far to seek.

137 313 [411] With few exceptions the trees are soft-woods, and these supply easy material for canoes and much of the house-building. One or two varieties of hard-woods are used for spears, but these weapons as well as the wooden 'sword' are usually made from the tough and springy *Koropa* palm. Other palms provide the slats used in flooring; and the

137 314 [262] pandanus, most useful of all, is valued for its fibre which is twisted into rope, and for its broad leaves which are sewn together to form the sleeping mat. One variety is prized for its fruit, a long red seed-cluster, which is boiled down to a porridge.

137 313 [262] One of the greatest natural assets of the Orokaiva is his sago. In the interior the palm is comparatively rare and each tree is carefully husbanded, but along the lower reaches of the rivers, where they are bordered by swamps of very great extent, the sago grows in a quantity which, as far as native wants are concerned, is probably inexhaustible. As a diet it is secondary to the taro, but among the river-dwellers at least it provides an unfailing resource in times of scarcity. The sago leaf thatches the house, and the midrib nowadays commonly forms the walls of the house. In the dismal swamps of the coast the *Nipa* palm furnishes another material for thatching, and the mangrove one of the most adaptable of native timbers.

137 262 Comparatively few fruit-bearing trees are found in the bush. The only exceptions of much consequence are the several varieties of bread-fruit, the *Okari* nut, and the tree called *Puga*. Mangoes are uncommon and of inferior quality, and of the numerous varieties of wild fig only one or two may be called edible. But there are numerous herbs, ferns, and tree leaves which always lend variety to Orokaiva cookery, and when scarcity prevails at the height of the South-East season may even become a stand-by. Indeed,

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

the various natural resources of the bush would probably enable the native to tide over a period in which the taro gardens failed completely.

Such clothing as he wears is made by beating out the bark of a *ficus* tree; his belt is plaited with thin strips of cane; his pipe is a tube of bamboo; his cheeks are streaked with a red paint obtained from a seed; his ready-made luggage-strap or the mooring cable for his canoe is a creeper withe or a length of rattan cane. These are only a few of the uses to which the Orokaiva, true forest-dweller that he is, may put the multifarious products of his environment. One cannot fail to be impressed by his wonderful familiarity with the forest—so perplexing to one who is not a woodsman—and with his extempore skill and resource in turning all its products to account.

Wide areas of the plain—though still but a small proportion of its total extent—are covered with *alang alang*, or long grass. The apparent spread of these grass patches, and the corresponding deforestation have caused the Government some anxiety. As yet, however, this aspect of the matter has made no appeal to the native. The grass patch, entirely unproductive as it is, and almost invincible to cultivation, yet provides an annual supply of game when it is burnt off by the hunting party. It seems, indeed, as if the grass were regarded in the light of a special asset to its owners.

Fauna

Of the wild animals which these burnings drive into the nets of the hunters most important is *sus papuensis*, that fierce long-legged animal which abounds throughout Papua. But there is an unclassified multitude of marsupials ranging downwards in size from the wallaby, all of which are welcome to the Orokaiva, who despises no meat that comes his way. Of the tree-climbing marsupials the most notable is the cuscus, with beautifully dappled fur of white, yellow, and brown, which is cut into strips and worn in long streamers from the armlet of the warrior; and in the hills a larger animal, the tree-kangaroo, whose rich brown fur is used for the same purpose. Most beautiful of all is the

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

kaiva. One is *samemi*, the narrow pearl-shell circle obtained from the trochus; the other is *siba*, the circle of coco-nut shell. Armlets of plaited cane or fern fibre are also common.

The skin of cuscus (*pauri*, *koviro*) may be attached to the armlets in the form of long streamers on which tufts of feathers may be tied at intervals. (The tanning of the skin is done, I am told, by powdering with red ochre or lime.)

(7) *Belts*.

These are mostly of plaited cane strips, sometimes with simple patterns made by introducing a darker material. The commonest of these patterns is shown on Plate IX (*b*).

Examples of finer texture are plaited with the strands of a creeper called *angoro*. A belt of another kind is made from the creeper named *sita*. Strands of this are plaited into a fine rope, black in colour, bearing a polish, which passes round the hips in multitudinous coils. The creeper is obtained only in the hills and is highly valued.